3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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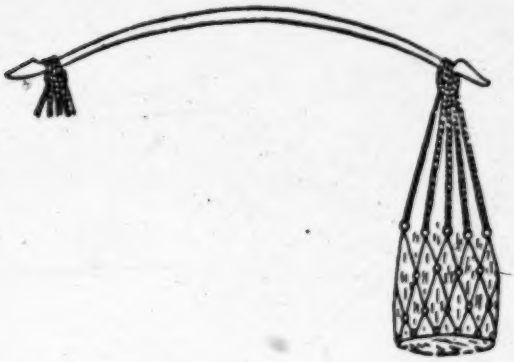
For purposes of transport, they use carrying-nets in the shape of bags slung at both ends of a pole carried on the shoulder called "Sikuar maran." They

Argo



Sika

are made of twisted strings of hemp fibre and are very strong. These are used by men ; while the women carry things on their head while marketing or on travel, using a basket for the purpose. At times one sees them carrying bottles nicely poised on their heads, in utter defiance of all laws of gravitation.

Dress

The Santal women now generally wear bordered "saris" not less than seven cubits in length. Half of this serves as the lower garment being knotted at the waist, the other half is passed over the left shoulder and hangs in the front. They use no veils for their heads of ravendark mass of wavy hair. They keep

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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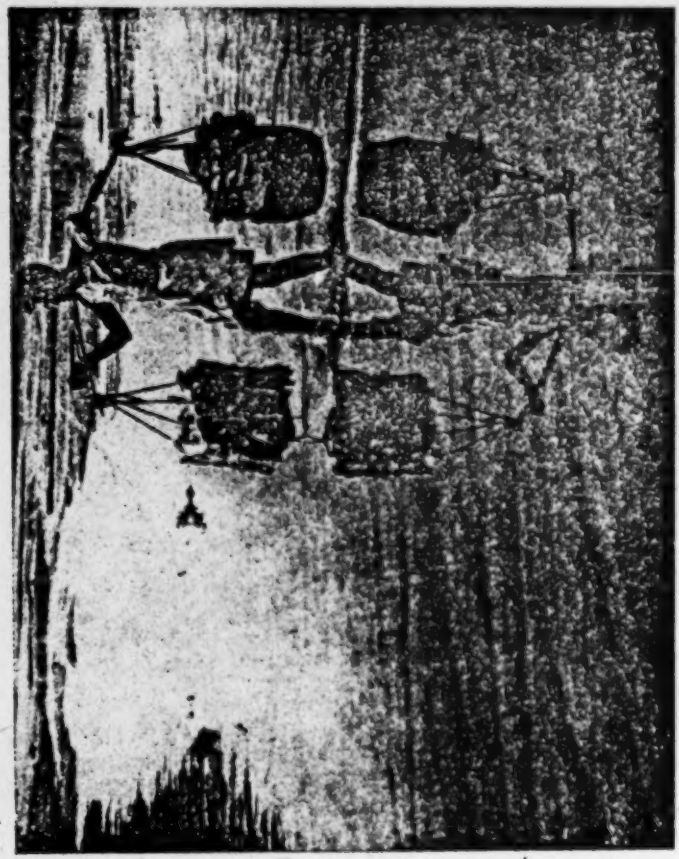

Crossing a river on way to market [Page 96]
Photo : D. S. Nahar

[End Plate 5]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

checks the free passage of an air current. The note produced can be varied within harmonic limits by the action of the lips. The Santals have string instruments also. In their instrument only one string is used which is of gut. The frame-work of it consists of a box-like resonator, hollowed out and covered with goat skin. This goat skin is fixed to it by means of small pins of bamboo. The string is attached at one end to the neck and at the other to the distal end of the resonator. The string has a tuning peg and a wooden bridge for regulating its tension. The dancing-drum (Tumdak) has a slightly conical body of burnt clay; the body is covered with patches of strips of bullock-hide wound tightly round it; both ends are covered with skin, the broad end generally with bullock-hide, the narrow end with the skin of goat. Both ends are laced with strips of bullock-hide, stretched from end to end close together. These strips make the instrument much stronger, and they are placed close together to prevent the clay body from being easily touched. The ends are given a rim of boiled rice spread over the surface in circular form, often painted black with a red and white ring outside. The Tumdak is carried over the shoulder in leather thongs, the broad end always to the left side. It is drummed with the hands, the broad end with the left hand and the narrow end with the right hand.

Dancing :- The Santals love dancing very much and every evening the boys and maidens gather on a reserved open space in front of Jog-manjhis house for dancing. Males and females both dance together, though at times they dance separately. The maidens during dancing smooth and adjust their long hair and

Sa Culshaw M-S (1892-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

by their parents. It is no uncommon sight to see a man striding along the road with a carrying pole across his shoulders; in the basket slung from one end he carries some of the family cooking utensils, while the youngest member of the family sits confidently in a basket at the other end. The immediate economic advantage of this annual migration, without which they might be forced to leave their present homes with dire consequences for their tribal stability, is secured at a heavy price. In addition to the toll on their health, tribal sanctions are loosened away from the village. Offenders against the tribal law, runaway brides, women accused of witchcraft, and many others who do not wish to submit to discipline can find a refuge away from their homes, and each year the number of those who elect to stay "east" is growing.

The older generation regard the yearly exodus as the prime cause of moral laxity because it flouts an old taboo. Formerly no Santal was supposed to cross the Damodar river, which forms the northern and eastern boundary of the Bankura district. When at first men were drawn away to work over the river the women were not allowed to accompany them. The reason given for this prohibition was that by crossing the river they would bring misfortune on themselves and their villages. The underlying causes may be connected in part with the fact that the tribal gods are forest gods and could not protect them on the other side of the river, where there are no forests; and partly linked with the fact that the Damodar has an important place in their customs for disposing of the dead.[1] Whatever they be, the old taboo is now ignored.

During the last few days of *Pus* (mid-January) and at each month's end till the Spring festival, parties of men, women and children can be seen returning along the roads in single file, the women always in front. They are bent on reaching their own villages before the festivities which mark the turn of the month. The old people watch for their return and the relieving of their responsibilities. They enjoy greater leisure and may be seen more often squatting on the narrow ledges that surround the houses, sunning themselves. As men and women return from the east they find employment chiefly in felling trees and in carting both wood and leaves to the railway. For many years the traditional attitude of the Santal to the forest has been to make clearings and begin cultivation. The forests of the area are privately owned by the landlords, and they are exploited for their timber.

[1] See Chapter 12, p. 153.